



Is appraisal of service learning experiences predictive of service choices the following year?

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Keywords: Heroism Day, service learning options, evaluation systems, longitudinal design

Conference track: Higher education student outcomes

Format: Poster presentation

Summary

The current study, longitudinal in design, examines the evaluation of service learning participation in one academic year and its ability to predict choices to serve the following year. The study is based on research from the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school year; college juniors who volunteered for community service on a school-wide service day were compared to those who chose other options (workshops and training). Previous research using this sample found that factors such as training and opportunity to meet the people being served positively correlated with students' perceptions of service learning experiences. This study extended into the following year to examine subsequent volunteering behavior.

Participants were 161 students at a midsized southeastern state college who evaluated a service learning experience ranging 10-20 hours in the 2010-2011 year (initial SL) and consented for their responses to be used in longitudinal research. In the second year of the study (fall 2011) they were given a choice of performing community service (CS) or doing an alternative activity (AA) on a school wide "Heroism Day." Students evaluated their service experiences both years on a self-report measure with items including attitudes and experiences before serving, characteristics of service learning experience, and perceived impact.

T-tests of independent means were used to compare students who indicated CS as first choice for Heroism Day 2011 with those whose first choice was something else (AA). The CS students were not significantly different from the AA students on most dimensions evaluated the previous year. With few exceptions the students' evaluations of their sophomore year's 10-20 hour service experience, therefore, did not predict community service or leadership choices the subsequent year.

Details on Heroism Day, service learning options, and evaluation systems will be further elaborated in poster presentation.

References

There were no references provided with this proposal.